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PRELIMINARY INTERROGATION REPORT ON OBLTN. CHLUBEK AND LT.RASCH BOTH OF III/LN. RGT. 353.

Interrogation took place at the Royal Patriotic School, WANDSWORTH on 7th Sept. 1945 and was conducted by Mr. COX in the presence of S/L WATERS, RAF STATION, CHEADLE. The report is general in character and covers Russian air links.

TICOM

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PRELIMINARY INTERROGATION REPORT

Introduction

Oblt. CHLUBEK and Lt. RASCH, both of III/Ln.Rgt. 353 were interviewed at the Royal Patriotic School, WANDSWORTH on 7.9.45. As the time available was limited, the interrogation was concentrated on obtaining a general picture of the extent of their knowledge, rather than detailed facts on particular aspects of their work. S/L WATERS, RAF Station CHEADLE, was present at the interrogation.

I. OBERLEUTNANT CHLUBEK

Personal History

CHLUBEK was born in 1912 at LEIPZIG; his education was normal, and on leaving BRESLAU University in 1935, he did his military service in Heeresnachrichtenabteilung 48, stationed at BRESLAU. After the end of his military service, he was engaged in civil employment for about a year. In 1937, however, he voluntarily rejoined the forces, and was employed at Fixed Intercept Station 24, again at BRESLAU. He remained there until the opening of the Russian campaign, when the station was transferred to REICHSHOF. Shortly afterwards he became a member of III/Ln Rgt 4. the Y Service Abt. of the Lfl. 4 Signals Rgt. He remained in this unit until the end of the war, its location moving with the land fighting. From September 1942 until May 1944 he was Y Liaison Officer with Luftflotte 4. After this, he returned to the Abteilung, taking the post of Ia. In this post, he was in charge of the Auswertung, and was responsible for the production of the intelligence reports issued by the Abt., and for organisation in general. In 1944, the Y service Abts. of the three Luftflotte Signals Rgts. on the Eastern front were combined to form one regiment, Ln.Rgt. 353 . Under this arrangement, III/Ln. Rgt. 4 became III/Ln. Rgt. 353.

Work of III/Ln. Rgt. 353.

R/T interception was done by forward units of the Abt. usually located at German fighter airfields. The results of R/T interception were passed to the Abt. by wireless.

W/T interception was undertaken at the Abt. headquarters. In the intercept room was a D/F control section, which passed instructions to outstations. D/F results were received at the Peilauswertung. From the intercept room, messages were first passed to the Betriebsauswertung (T.A. Section), whose task it was to identify intercepted traffic, and to write in callsign identities on the message forms. The messages were then passed to the cryptographic section, which in general was able to decode two-, three- and four-figure traffic. The final stage was the Endauswertung, which was responsible for extracting intelligence from the material and issuing reports. Long range bomber traffic was dealt with by a specialist section of which Lt. RASCH, the other P/W interrogated, was the head.

Reports.

Three types of report were produced by the Abt. - Immediate Reports, Daily Reports, and Fortnightly Reports.

Immediate Reports.

Immediate reports were issued whenever information was received on which direct action might be taken by German forces. They may be considered under three main subject headings:-

(i) Information on the activity of long range bombers. This point is dealt with more fully under RASCH, but included warnings that bombers had taken off and D/F fixes on the aircraft in flight.

(ii) Information about railway activity, such as the arrival of trains with important freight at particular railway stations.

(iii) Requests for air support from liaison officers with the army.

The most important recipient of these reports was the Luftflotte; there were two direct landlines between the Abt. and the Luftflotte, which were maintained throughout the many changes in location necessitated by the fluctuations in the land fighting, and it was never necessary to fall back on the stand-by wireless channels. Immediate reports were also passed to the Regimental headquarters, which was in close touch with OKL, to the Zentralauswertung fuer Flugwegverfolgung, and to the local Jafue.

Daily Reports

The daily reports were divided into five sections:-

(i) New information of importance, such as additions to order of battle, new airfields, activity of supply dumps and railway stations. This part of the report was teleprinted in advance.

(ii) The Air Armies. Each Air Army in the sector covered by the Abt. was considered in turn, and all fresh information about it was included under the headings
(a) flying units,
(b) ground organisation.
Such details as strength returns, operations, transfers etc. were reported. The Abt. covered, from South to North, the 17th, 5th, and 8th Air Armies, and was occasionally able to give information about the 2nd Air Army, which properly lay in the area covered by II/Ln Rgt. 353 to the North.

(iii) The Long Range Bomber Force (ADD).

(iv) Black Sea Coastal Units.

(v) PWO Units (Home defence formations).

Fortnightly Reports

These were arranged in exactly the same way as the daily reports, but were designed to give a longer term picture of developments in the SAF. The distribution of these reports was very wide, and included: OKL (Gen.Nafue), OKL (Chi-Stelle, Ref D), Ln. Rgt. 353, neighbouring Y Service Abts., Army Y Service Abts., Lfl. 4 Ic, Lfl. 4 Y Liaison Officer, Lfl. 4 Bildstelle, and local Fliegerkorps, Fliegerdivs, Flakkorps and Army Groups.

Traffic

While CHLUBEK had a good knowledge of the general principles of traffic identification, he was not a specialist in this subject. He could give no definite information on callsign and frequency systems. After a frequency change, net-works were invariable picked up again by the intercept operators who recognised the ones for which they were responsible by individual pecularities in procedure. In the Betriebsauswertung identifications were made on the basis of the callsigns and frequencies used. Frequencies and callsigns changed at intervals depending on the unit concerned; callsign repeats occurred periodically. Message preambles were of the greatest assistance in identifying traffic; serial numbers to messages continued in an unbroken chain over frequency and callsign changes. Continuity was also maintained through pro-forma returns sent in plain language. Many types of these were intercepted, according to the nature of the originating unit; with flying units aircraft and crew strengths would be reported, while supply units would send details of stocks of materials of various kinds held. Comparison of successive returns enabled networks to be identified. Further material for identification was obtained from the addresses and signatures of these texts. Originally they consisted of officers' names sent in clear, but these were later replaced by three-figure groups, which remained constant.

In air to ground traffic, callsigns were again a valuable source of continuity. Unit callsigns repeated periodically, and individual pilots appended terminal figures which remained constant indefinitely.

Intelligence

CHLUBEK stated that the pro-forma returns mentioned above were the most valuable source of intelligence at their disposal. Some were intercepted daily, some periodically on all kinds of network. They provided information on strengths, basings, supply etc. Warnings of impending operations to front line Flak units often gave many hours warning of attacks. American "shuttle" raids were reported in this way.

Impressions of CHLUBEK

CHLUBEK appeared to be an extremely competent intelligence officer, with a good grasp of his work.

His manner was confident and he was fully co-operative, though he stated that he fully realised the secret nature of the information he was giving, and that he was only giving it because he had received orders to that effect from his German superiors. He has been set homework on:-

(i) His work in general.
(ii) The relative value of T.A. and decoded texts for intelligence.
(iii) The Russian Safety Service Organisation.
(iv) The numbering of Russian flying units.

He was a little unwilling to embark on large-scale homework, as he states that he has already written a forty page essay on his work, which he gave to "the Americans" at KISSINGEN in June.

II. LEUTNANT RASCH

Personal History

RASCH entered the German Y Service in 1937 as a civilian wireless operator, and became an Auswerter in the following year. Until 1940 he was employed in the West, and was engaged on RAF traffic, including "Inter-Command Nets". (This came out only at the end of the interrogation, and it was therefore not possible to examine RASCH in detail on this subject). He entered the GAF later in 1940, and joined 9/Ln Rgt 4, (later III/ Ln.Rgt.353). He specialised in Russian Long Range Bomber traffic, and became head of the section of the Auswertung of III/353 dealing with this subject.

The Russian Long Range Bomber Force.

The Russian LRB force (ADD) was independent of the Air Armies. It consisted of nine Korps, directly controlled by a staff at MOSCOW. At the beginning of 1945, however, the force was re-organised under a new Air Army, the 18th, and the number of Korps reduced to four by amalgamating the old nine. This led to certain alterations in wireless procedure which had not finally been cleared up at the end of the war. The wireless organisation described below refers to the period before this change, except where the contrary is specifically stated.

Ground Networks.

W/T communication was maintained between the staff at MOSCOW and the nine Korps on frequencies in the 5000- 10000 kcs band for day, and 3000-5000 kcs, band for night. Duplex working was employed, and the operating standard was high. Each Korps had four day and four night frequencies at its disposal.

Three-symbol callsigns were used which changed daily. Traffic consisted of four and five-figure, five-letter and proforma returns. The five-figure and five-letter traffic was not read. The traffic was easily recognisable by its address and signature procedure. Each message was prefixed by ADR and two three-figure groups, and ended with SIG and two three-figure groups. Of the three-figure groups, the first indicated a department, such as admin. office, met, station etc., while the second indicated the actual unit. The groups in the second place changed every few days, but repeated periodically. The traffic intercepted included the following types of message:-

(i) From MOSCOW, operational orders to the Korps.
(ii) From MOSCOW, details of navigational aids to be operating during the next twenty-four hours. If this message had not been intercepted by midday, it could be concluded that there would be no operations during the ensuing night. (III/Ln.Rgt. 353 intercepted Russian radio beacon transmissions but made no tactical use of the interceptions for raid forecasting).
(iii) From MOSCOW, operational orders for the Air Armies operating in the neighbourhood of any of the bomber Korps, for information.

(iv) From the Korps, reports of operations. (Time of take-off and landing, number of aircraft employed etc.)
(v) From the Korps, strength returns every five days.
(vi) Met. reports.

The Korps maintained wireless communication with their subordinate divisions when considerations of distance demanded this. Messages were invariably sent in four-figure cypher, and were similar in nature to those on the Korps-MOSCOW links. Because of the smaller distances involved, the frequencies used were much lower.

Air to Ground Communication.

Traffic was normally W/T, though R/T was sometimes used for take-off traffic. Aircraft tended to use frequencies between 3000 and 3800 kcs, except for the 4th Korps, which had American equipment (B 25s), and used frequencies at intervals of 50 kcs up to 5500 kcs. Each Korps had its own habits in changing callsigns, frequencies and codes. Groundstations used two- or three- letter callsigns, and flying units one- or two-letter. Each pilot added a recognition number to the root callsign of the flying unit to make up the aircraft callsign. Where the numbers were issued by the Regiment, they ranged from 1-32, where they were issued by the Division, they ranged from 1-100.

The first traffic to be intercepted in connection with an operation was the tuning from the ground-station. This consisted of a single repeated letter, peculiar to individual Regiments. The letter allotted to a Regiment changed at the same times as the callsigns changed (usually about once a week, according to unit).

Each aircraft reported to the ground-station as it became airborne. On the way to and from the target aircraft requested and received D/F fixes, and sent D/F signals for this purpose. The results were passed back to the aircraft in grid, fixes on the outward flight being prefixed by the letter W, and on the return flight by A.

Two- or three-figure codes were used, each Korps using one type or the other. Two-figure codes consisted of a hundred fixed groups of vocabulary written into a square ten by ten. Along the left hand edge and along the bottom the numbers from 0 to 9 were written in two different hatted orders, the code group being produced by reading off the "co-ordinates" of the required meaning. The three-figure codes consisted of about 200 meanings, to which were allotted consecutive three-figure groups. Both two- and three-figure traffic was decoded without the slightest difficulty.

Re-organisation of the Russian LRB Force.

Early in 1945 a new Air Army, the 18th, was formed to control the LRB Korps. Of the former nine Korps only four, and possibly a fifth remained. The four corps identified under the new organisation were:-

1st Guards LRB Korps.
2nd Guards LRB Korps.
4th LRB Korps.
7th LRB Korps.

4th Korps used two figure code, and 7th Korps used three-figure. 2nd Korps, which had been amalgamated with the old 3rd Korps (which had used three-figure) now used both two and three-figure code. Similar inconsistencies in wireless habits appeared where two Korps with different procedures had been joined. RASCH remembers that the 14th (Guards), 15th (Guards) 35th and 45th Divisions were subordinated to the 4th LRB Korps.

Impression of RASCH

RASCH, though fully co-operative, seemed rather nervous and restrained in his manner; it was necessary to draw him out. Unlike CHLUBEK, he is well acquainted with the practical side of handling and identifying traffic. His knowledge of the Russian LRB force is extensive. He has undertaken to write homework on the following subjects:-

(i) Recognition of Russian LRB traffic
(ii) SAF grid systems
(iii) Two- and three-figure codes
(iv) Message preambles
(v) The organisation of the Russian LRB force
(vi) Pro-forma messages (in conjunction with CHLUBEK).

W.R. Cox. 8/9/45.